

Remarks Welcoming King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel

July 25, 1994

History is made when brave leaders find the power to escape the past and create a new future. Today two such leaders come together, as we welcome King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin to the White House on this extraordinary occasion.

On this morning of promise, these visionary statesmen from ancient lands have chosen to heal the rift that for too long has divided their peoples. They have seen the outlines of a better day where others have seen darkness. They have sought peace in place of violence.

On both sides of the River Jordan there have lived generations of people who thought this day would never come. King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin have reached out to each other across the river, to build a future where hatred gives way to hope.

The Koran instructs us, "Requite evil with good, and he who is your enemy will become your dearest friend." And the Talmud teaches, "That man is a hero that can make a friend out of a foe." Before us today stand friends and heroes.

King Hussein, Prime Minister Rabin, all Americans welcome your presence here today. You give us great hope that this house, our people's house, will be a constant witness to a lasting peace that spreads forth to embrace your region.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Israel-Jordan Washington Declaration

July 25, 1994

Your Majesties, Prime Minister and Mrs. Rabin, distinguished guests: Today we gather to bear witness to history. As this century draws to a close, a new era of peace opens before us in ancient lands as brave men choose reconciliation over conflict. Today our faith is renewed.

As we write a new chapter in the march of hope over despair on these grounds and at this historic table, we remember the courage of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin and the leadership of President Carter at Camp David 15 years ago, the efforts of President Bush to bring Israel and her neighbors together in Madrid 2 years ago, and that shining September day last year when Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat declared that their two peoples would fight no more.

Today, in that same spirit, King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin will sign the Washington Declaration. After generations of hostility, blood, and tears, the leaders of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel will solemnly declare, with the world as their witness, that they have ended the state of belligerency between them. From this day forward, they pledge to settle their differences by peaceful means. Both countries will refrain from actions that may adversely affect the security of the other and will thwart all those who would use terrorism to threaten either side.

The Washington Declaration is the product of much hard work. Less than a year ago, Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan and Foreign Minister Peres of Israel met here publicly for the first time. Together, with the wise counsel and persistent energy of the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, Israel and Jordan have pursued peace. And we are all in their debt.

It takes but a minute or two to cross the River Jordan, but for as long as most of us can remember, the distance has seemed immense. The awful power of ancient arguments and the raw wounds of recent wars have left generations of Israelis, Jordanians, and Palestinians unable to imagine, much less build, a life of peace and security. Today King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin give their people a new currency of hope and the chance to prosper in a region of peace.

Under the Washington Declaration, Jordan and Israel have agreed to continue vigorous negotiations to produce a treaty of peace based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin will meet as often as necessary to shepherd and personally direct those negotiations.

Their objective is a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace between Israel and all its neighbors, a peace in which each acknowledges and respects the territorial integrity and political independence of all others and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

In the meantime, Jordan and Israel have decided to take immediate steps to normalize relations and resolve disputes in areas of common concern. They have agreed to survey the international border based on the work of their boundary subcommission. They have resolved that negotiations on water resources should aim to establish the rightful allocation between the two sides of the waters of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. They have determined that their police forces will cooperate in combating crime, with a special emphasis on drug smuggling. They have set up as their joint purpose the abolition of all economic boycotts and the establishment of a bilateral economic cooperation.

And as of today, Jordan and Israel have agreed to take the first practical steps to draw their people together and to let the peoples of the world share in the wonders of their lands. They will establish direct telephone links, connect their two nations' electricity grids, open two border crossings between their nations, including one at Aqaba and Eilat and another in the north, accelerate the negotiations aimed at opening an international air corridor between the two countries, and give free access to third-country tourists traveling between their two nations. These are the building blocks of a modern peace and ancient holy lands.

Your Majesty, after our first meeting, you wrote me a heartfelt letter in which you referred to your revered grandfather King Abdullah. You told me that his untimely assassination at the entrance to Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque had come at a time when he was intent on making peace with Israel. Had he completed his mission, you said to me, your region would have been spared four decades of war. Today, 43 years later, Abdullah's grandson has fulfilled his legacy. And in the declaration you will sign, your role

as guardian of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites, Al Aqsa among them, has been preserved. And Israel has agreed to accord a high priority to Jordan's historic role regarding these holy sites in final status negotiations.

Prime Minister, when you first visited me in the White House, you spoke eloquently of your soldier's life, defending and guiding your nation through four bloody decades of struggling to survive. You told me your people had had enough bloodshed, that this was time to make peace. Ten months ago, you stood on this same lawn and shook the hand of Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestinian people. Today you stand together with King Hussein, descendant of the Prophet Mohammed, to declare that Jordan and Israel have ended their conflict. In holding out to your people the hope of a normal, secure life, you, sir, have fulfilled the mission of your life and of all those who have fought by your side for so long.

Now as we go forward, we must guard against illusions. Dark forces of hatred and violence still stalk your lands. We must not let them succeed.

King Hussein, Prime Minister Rabin, as you and your people embark on this journey of peace, we know the road will not be easy. Just as we have supported you in coming this far, the United States will walk the final miles with you. We must all go on until we ensure that the peace you are seeking prevails in the Holy Land and extends to all Israel's Arab neighbors. Our common objective of a comprehensive peace must be achieved.

Now as we witness the signing of this declaration and applaud the bravery of these men, let us remember that peace is much more than a pledge to abide by words on a page. It is a bold attempt to write a new history. Guided by the blessings of God, let us now go forward and give life to this declaration. For if we follow its course, we will truly achieve a peace of the generations.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at the State Dinner for King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel
July 25, 1994

Your Majesties, Prime Minister and Mrs. Rabin, all our distinguished guests: Welcome to the White House. Today we have seen history in the making. And tonight we celebrate this marvelous occasion with King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin and to all of you who for so long have supported their efforts for peace.

It's a special pleasure for Hillary and for me to welcome Queen Noor and Mrs. Rabin who, in their devotion to the health and the well-being of the children of their nations, prove that the quest for peace is not the only cause that knows no borders.

Today's signing of the Washington Declaration is the handiwork of many. But it is safe to say we would not be here tonight were it not for the persistent and far-sighted efforts of Crown Prince Hassan, Foreign Minister Peres, and our Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. I want to express my special gratitude to Secretary Christopher, who has brought such great energy and devotion to this task, and to applaud all three gentlemen for their efforts.

The Washington Declaration is a blueprint, both inspiring and practical, a foundation for lasting peace between two peoples who have been divided for too long. It is also clearly a personal tribute to two brave leaders, both called upon at a young age to shoulder enormous responsibilities, one to be a king, the other a defender of his people, brought together now at long last in the common cause of peace.

King Hussein, tonight we recall again the legacy of your grandfather and mentor, King Abdullah, a man who dreamed that one day, on both sides of the River Jordan, Arab and Jew could live together in peace and who lost his life for that dream of peace. At the age of 17, when most of us were still in school, you were left to shoulder the great weight of leading your people.

In the 42 years that have passed, you have led your kingdom through the stormy waters of the Middle East. You have improved the lives of your people and endowed your nation

with a spirit of tolerance, civility, and compromise. You've built bridges between the Arab world and the United States through your actions as an advocate for stability and through your marriage to the Queen, herself a daughter of Americans who came from the Arab world. For that, we, sir, are in your debt.

And today you have moved to erase the divisions between the people of the two sides of the River Jordan. Tonight it can truly be said that you have fulfilled the legacy of King Abdullah.

Mr. Prime Minister, tonight we honor you, a son of the land of Israel. Your parents, Nehemia and Rosa, were among the first pioneers who came to Palestine. And like so many others of their generation, they devoted their lives to building a national home for the Jewish people.

Schooled in the science of agriculture, you once planned to devote your life to making the fields and deserts of Israel come alive. But at the age of 19, you answered the call to join the Palmach, destined to spend your life fighting to establish and defend the nation of Israel.

Now, after a life consumed by a war, you have become the architect of a great peace, building a homeland your parents could only imagine, a peaceful, prosperous land at harmony with its neighbors, a land where a new generation will be free to cast aside its weapons and fulfill your dream to make the valleys and deserts bloom. Tonight we honor you and the fulfillment of your legacy, sir.

These two men have crossed much hostile territory so that their children and their children's children need fight no more. They have earned this peace, and we are all in their debt.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to rise and join me in a toast to these men of courage, to their fine families, to the peoples of Jordan and Israel, and to the promise of peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:36 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.